The Unitarian Calendar

"Church-going may indeed become a thoughtless social habit. So also may staying at home."

Vol. 6 SEPTEMBER — 1913 No. 1

OUR NATIONAL SOCIETIES

With headquarters in the building of the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Local offices at 104 East 20th Street, New York City; 105 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill., and 376 Sutter Street, San Francisco, Cal.

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Founded in 1825.

The chief missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes books, tracts, and devotional works.

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The Unitarian Calendar

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HUMAN GOODNESS

REV. ARTHUR MAXSON SMITH

Of the First Unitarian Church, Berkeley, Cal.

We hear much of the divine goodness which, in a vague sort of way, we hold before us as the *summum bonum* of all character development, and yet so far beyond our earthly power to acquire that we can hardly hope to claim it as our own, short of an eternity of continued effort. It is true, nevertheless, that all we really know of goodness is garnered from our practical, work-a-day lives, in our struggle to live with each other in peace and to give to all the largest measure of freedom to use the powers with which nature has endowed us. Someone has aptly said that God is the noblest creation of man's mind. As to the attributes of the divine being there is much truth in this. God is the sum of all the best we human beings have come to realize of goodness. We may assume that there is infinitely more of goodness in His being, forever beyond our ken, and it is good for us to assume this. But we sometimes forget that this goodness of God must really be of the human kind, if it is in any manner appreciable by human beings, and that all of these notions of God's goodness have come up out of the idealism and moral effort of the human spirit. God's goodness grows from the soil of human realities, it does not drop down upon us from a supernatural heaven. We struggle to be true,—true to the realities of experience,—being happy, and to be happy being true. Being both true and, in a measure, happy, our hope leaps forward along the vistas of the greater happi-

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ness and truth, the ever enlarging goodness, and at the end we behold the God of all Worth, the sum of all possible truth and blessedness. But we really know as little of the measure and quality of the goodness of God as we know of the goodness of mankind a million years hence. At that time there would still be the forward look, and the Good God beckoning onward.

Now this absence of finality in our knowledge of human or divine goodness is, after all, a most glorious tribute to the worth of the human spirit. Moreover, it is the very thing that links us to the divine and makes possible our sense of kinship with God Himself. If the goodness of God were knowable and definable in terms of something other than human goodness, then He would indeed be different in kind, as well as in degree, and we should forever be set off apart from Him, with no possible sense of the growth of our spirits into the likeness of his own, and with no kindred Father beckoning us onward to a larger share in His life and will and love. Again, is it not due just to the fact that there is no real chasm between the "divine" and the "human" that our human spirits have their forward impulse and their idealistic moral insight? We should never have had a God but for the fact that we are divine, and our God could never be "good" save in the goodness that springs up from the depths of the human heart. Reality is one. Human goodness is a part of the eternal All-Being. God is at home in the human spirit. We shall forever become more like Him because our growing goodness is the constant unfolding and growth of His own good thought and will.

It is not so sad to be drunk with wine as with covetousness. For he that is seized with illness from wine after the night is over, may get sober, but the covetous person is always drunken, day and night, watching or sleeping. —*St. Chrysostum.*

GOD POTENT IN MAN

REV. WM. S. MORGAN, PH. D.

The human child can say at any moment, I am God, because he is an inseparable and necessary part of God. And this all-inclusive being has in his life and its manifestations all grades of light and shade, all stages of striving life. In the world and the characters of the world drama we behold the ever-changing expression of God's face. The scientist writes an abstract statement which he calls a law,—the law of gravitation or chemical action, etc. But, since a law is only the description of the way in which a particular being acts, we can just as truly say, The scientist, in writing a law, writes God's method of doing things. Thus the law of gravitation is the way God holds masses together, both molar and molecular. The acting thing is God in all his self-conscious being. The laws of nature describe the ways of his mind. All force and energy, and therefore all matter, are simply the volitional powers of God's mind, including God's thought and emotion. The processes of man's mind have their roots in the processes of God's mind. This is the philosophical meaning of inspiration, genius, and revelation. A Shakespeare, Dante, Homer, or Goethe, a Jesus, Paul, or an Isaiah, a Copernicus, Newton, or Darwin, simply expresses in his individuality a larger measure of God; and this larger presence becomes an inspiring genius,

> "Breathing in the thinker's creed,
> Pulsing in the hero's blood,"

and

> "Consecrating art and song";

yea, verily, singing in poetry, leading to the wordless infinite in music, to ravishing beauty in art, to devout appreciation in religion, and to a rational construction of the universe in philosophy and science.

UNITARIAN SALVATION

REV. JAMES T. BIXBY, PH. D.

Salvation, in the Unitarian view, depends not upon being immersed or confirmed, or becoming a regular church member or undergoing some peculiar emotional experience, but on the formation of the godly character and the leading of a sincere, noble and righteous life. The only true Christian is the one whose spirit is Christ-like, full of purity, charity, truth, and love; and no soul is really saved till it escapes from the grasp of all meanness, hypocrisy, dishonesty, and low selfishness.

Regeneration is no mystical, emotional experience, but our own voluntary development of larger manhood, stricter integrity, and an ampler love. Neither faith alone nor works alone will effect this, but the work that is inspired by faith, and which ripens the character that is at once the fruit of the past and the root and guarantee of future usefulness and righteous life.

Unitarians believe in the dignity of human nature, not in the total depravity or total disarrangement of man's being. Men are by nature children of God, not of Satan: objects of God's love, not his wrath. The doctrine of the fall of man in Adam and the failure of God's noblest work is a doctrine that does not honor or justify the Creator, but dishonors him. We acknowledge that the nature of man has suffered from the sins and inherited evil propensities of past ages; but it has been elevated and blessed, even more, by the virtues and inherited good tendencies of those whose blood fills our veins. The path of man has not been a downward, but an upward one. Humanity is still very imperfect, but it is slowly and surely advancing to higher things.

Watching for riches consumeth the flesh, and the care thereof driveth away sleep.—*Ecclus., xxxi.*, 1.

DAILY BIBLE READING

Some years ago the Plymouth and Bay Ministerial Association elected a special committee to prepare a list of daily Bible readings.

The purpose in view was two-fold; first, to familiarize young people with the great Hebrew classics, and second, to refresh the minds of older people by guiding them in a regular and systematic manner.

Bible reading in the home is no longer pursued as a matter of duty, or of conscience. No longer is this collection of books regarded with superstitious reverence. It has long since taken its place in competition with all other literary expressions of the religious spirit the world over. And just because it has thus lost its dogmatic claim upon the modern conscience its greatest value is often entirely forfeited. The present generation cannot realize how much it is indebted to the Old and New Testaments, whether they be regarded as sources of spiritual inspiration or merely as collections of ancient literature. The very language of these books has had a greater influence upon the English tongue than any other. No great statesman or writer since John Wycliffe but has betrayed its influence in quotation, manner of expression and spiritual power. It has in large part formed the intellectual habit of the race, especially where clearness, force and dignity of expression are in question.

We need, especially at the present time, a more vivid familiarity with this great text book of religious education. Our young people everywhere are subjected to no end of vulgarity and slang. In college life, where if anywhere the English language should receive its just deserts, the speaking and writing of our mother tongue is often reduced to nothing better than a street *patois*. It was John Fiske who said, "One of the surest indices of true culture, whether professedly literary or not, is the power to express one's self in precise, rhythmic, and digni-

fied language." Do our schools and colleges furnish full opportunity for such culture? And where may one find better models to this end than in the English translations of the Hebrew writers?

But Bible reading, intelligently and seriously conducted, serves a still higher purpose. One can delve but a short distance even into what is mythological among the incidents depicted in the Old Testament without coming upon those wonderful nuggets of wisdom which represent untold ages of human experience. The ethical standards of the people referred to may be barbarous and the views of the writers may be as provincial and bigoted as a small, ancient race necessitated; but the intensity of their God-consciousness filled their lives with a spiritual perception which is seldom experienced among the peoples of to-day.

Bible reading should be pursued in order that the present and future generations may not lose their heritage of spiritual inspiration. For however the times may change, and however our views of social progress may be elevated and clarified, there are certain eternal principles of life applicable to all times and peoples suggested in the Bible that can be found nowhere else.

When the committee of the Plymouth and Bay Association was formed the Rev. George E. MacIlwain, now of Toledo, Ohio, was a member. Mr. MacIlwain has preserved and completed the list of daily readings then proposed. These references will appear in the October CALENDAR, to be used daily by those who wish to follow such a course of reading, beginning on November 1st. The December readings will appear in the November CALENDAR, and so on through the year, except during the summer months, when the CALENDAR is omitted. It is hoped that as many as possible among those who see the CALENDAR will look up the passages indicated, and read them carefully and thoughtfully. It will be well worth the trouble.

GOD'S EVERLASTING MERCY

REV. HENRY HALLAM SAUNDERSON

Of the Third Congregational Society, Cambridge, Mass.

Improvements in the methods by which men deal with defective members of human society have turned men from the belief in everlasting punishment to the belief in God's everlasting mercy. Against violators of law men have directed vindictive measures. Cruel and unmerciful punishments have been meted out. But men are ashamed of these atrocious things. Everywhere in civilization men are seeking to substitute reformation for retribution. They are proceeding on the principle that the ultimate betterment of the man is the object of the punishments which should be inflicted. The idea which men called "justice," a crude endeavor to balance retribution and the wrong-doing, is giving place to the idea of the need of the man, and the endeavor to supply that need. Men realize that there is justification only for the punishment which has hope at the far end. While men have made progress along these lines, they have nourished a growing conviction that God's methods of dealing with sinners are as good as those of our best reformatories. Is God less wise and patient than men? Is God working for retribution instead of reformation? Does he inflict punishments in which there is no hope at the far end?

There is, in the minds of multitudes of men, the growing conviction that God has infinite patience and inexhaustible resources for dealing with sinners. In some civilized states men still keep up the custom of putting to death some criminals,—a confession that we are at the end of our resources. When we put such men finally outside our social fabric, it is an admission of our failure. But shall God ever have to confess that he is at the end of his resources? Or that his patience with perverse people is less than their perversity? Shall God have to cast away some

souls as beyond his power of help? While God is infinite, are his means of reformation finite? When men have tried every devious way and there is nothing left but the straight road of truth, shall they not find God standing with infinite patience, ready to restore them to life and righteousness?

YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH

(From the Christian Register)

The advisability of young people joining the church is questioned on the ground that they ought to wait till they are sure their minds will not change, and till maturity settles all the questions likely to come up. This caution applies to those who are still children, but it should not apply to youths and maidens. Such alliance is an aid to pure and high-minded living at the time when such aid is most critical and decisive. Young people are able to think for themselves more than many elders realize, and they do think for themselves. If they espouse a good cause in other directions, they are not restrained. Indeed nothing is more desired than that good associations and interests should be taken up in the formative period of life. Why should this espousal, then, be looked on with question and distrust? As for changing minds and settled questions, when will the age arrive when minds may not change and questions be settled? Nothing in the obligations of adherence forbids obedience to any future conviction or commits one to immature views. The act is a simple one of choice of direction and association, and in our churches ought to commend itself especially to those of cautious and conscientious temper. If it were more common, our churches would be stronger and, what is better, our young people would be stronger.

CHURCH-GOING AND THE ART OF LIVING

REV. HENRY C. PARKER

Of the First Unitarian Parish, Woburn, Mass.

No matter how poor the service, the purpose of it is high, and no one who thinks at all can be in a church and not know that it stands for things toward which we aspire and have not yet attained. And this aspiration is itself a redeeming force in life. More than any other thing it sets man above the beast and marks him as the conscious child of the eternal God. Always in the church the call is to use the mind on the greatest subjects that it can entertain, and such thinking, if it be serious and earnest, cannot fail to have a broadening and ennobling effect. And the sentiments expressed in sacred literature, in prayer and spiritual songs are for the uplift of life; and the sympathetic worshipper who is in his pew not as a mere critic or fault-finder, though I should not wish to deny any one that holy privilege, but as one who wants to be inspired and made to forget his petty cares and insect miseries in the larger interests and issues of life, cannot have part in such a service and not be blessed in his act. And if I were to give advice to a young person going from home to live in a place where he will be a stranger, I should say to him, First of all, after finding the place where you are to lay your head and feed your body, find a church-home, and make yourself at home in it as soon as ever you can. Do not wait to be sought out and drawn to it, but go to it at once and identify yourself with it, so that you will feel that you are in it and of it, and its life is your life. Take a seat and pay for it, and be a sharer in its privileges, its responsibilities and its labors. Do not try to see how much you can get out of it for nothing; but how much you can put into it that will enrich your life and that of your fellow worshippers, and in all ways let it be known by your acts more than by your words

that you are there to help, and that what concerns the welfare of the church concerns you. And I feel quite sure that the young person who should act upon this advice would find that he had taken the course that meant more to him in the way of right and happy living than anything else he could have done. By so doing he would have not only the inspirations of the Sunday services but the spiritual companionship of good people, and the incentives to right living which such companionship gives. And if the young person who remains at home should follow the same counsel he might be surprised to find how much more than he has yet dreamed the church might mean to his life.

But in calling your attention to the value of the church and religion as helpers to right living I do not forget other agencies or means to the same end.

The president emeritus of Harvard University said, that the purpose of the college was one with that of the church, namely, to prepare growing minds for happy, serviceable life. And we all recognize the value of education in the art of living. We recognize the value of all those disciplines of mind and will which give us the mastery of ourselves, the free use of our powers, so that when we discern the right and the true we may steer straightway there, whatever the enticements that would turn us from our path.

We recognize the value of good habits, especially the habit of doing disagreeable things first and having them out of the way that they may not cast a shadow over the more agreeable duties and stand before us as hideous accusers when we would indulge ourselves in the pleasures of life.

We recognize the importance of making the habit of doing the right so insistent that however painful it may be to do it, it would give greater pain not to do it; of making the habit of meeting the responsibility and bearing our full share of life's burdens

so imperative that the thought of escape, of shirking, would be too painful to be a temptation.

We recognize also the value of the home-life as a school for right and cheerful living; also of the social life, and of cultivating the amenities of social intercourse, and the graces that make all our common relations wholesome and agreeable.

It matters not what our position, into all the relations of our lives we may, if we have it, carry a spirit that will make them a source of joy to others and may derive from them, if we so will to do, that which shall mean more abundant life to ourselves. And this is something worth thinking about and striving for, is it not?

FRIENDSHIP AND WORSHIP

"The motives for attending church will be different with different persons, but I shall utter a universal feeling when I say that Friendship should be a controlling inducement to draw us thither. How many of us, I wonder, go to church with the sunny feeling of at-one-ness with everybody and a wish to be a blessing for everybody uppermost, rather than the thought, 'I wonder who is going to preach, and whether it will be interesting.' In the East, people often go to church from a kind of settled ecclesiasticism; in the West I think there is very little of this among the more liberal sects, but that here they go *to hear a man.* But the church should be a place where a motive better than either brings me gladly. I come *to meet friends,* and to meet them on the *upper hill-sides* of our nature. The worship comes as a consequence of the friendly meeting. It is first you and then God, and that is one of the shortest paths to God—through human hearts. He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

THE KING'S GIFTS

REV. MARION FRANKLIN HAM

Of the Christian Union Church, Reading, Mass.

A friend, in a moment of anger, wounded me with an unjust word. The blow cut deep into my heart, but deeper into his that struck it, for I suffered only the pain of wounded pride, while he severed the love which bound his soul to mine. So for a day the pain of our mutual wound made us as strangers. Then the Lord of Life said: "My children, why are you so sad? Behold my gifts. To him that struck the blow I give the precious experience of true repentance and the opportunity to win a great spiritual victory by seeking a brother's forgiveness; and to him that received the blow I give, as double recompense, the divine privilege of forgiving a brother and forgetting an injury."

Church-going. Go to church to get food for mind and soul. A famous Massachusetts lawyer once said that it was a mighty poor sermon that didn't hit him somewhere. Some prophet or teacher can interpret helpfully to you the problems of life from the spiritual standpoint, reveal the meaning of discipline, set you thinking on the great subject of the human soul and its relation to its Maker and its fellows. And even if you do not find the preacher who exactly suits you, there can hardly fail to be crumbs of instruction and inspiration that will fall into your lap if you will but listen regularly and without prejudice.—*Rev. H. F. Moulton.*

Lust is an immoderate wantonness of the flesh, a sweet poison, a cruel pestilence, which weakeneth the body of man, and effeminateth the strength of an heroic mind. —*Hugo.*

UNITARIAN HYMN

The Voice of the Soul.

Hast thou, 'midst life's empty noises,
  Heard the solemn steps of time,
And the low, mysterious voices
  Of another clime?

Early hath life's mighty question
  Thrilled within thy heart of youth,
With a deep and strong beseeching,—
  What, and where, is truth?

Not to ease and aimless quiet
  Doth the inward answer tend;
But to works of love and duty,
  As our being's end:

Earnest toil and strong endeavor
  Of a spirit which within
Wrestles with familiar evil
  And besetting sin;

And without, with tireless vigor,
  Steady heart, and purpose strong,
In the power of truth assaileth
  Every form of wrong.

—*John G. Whittier.*

Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work:

That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers and cutteth him out windows; and it is ceiled with cedar and painted with vermillion.

—*Jer., xxii.*

CHURCH GOING

"I do not believe any of us can afford to neglect the Sunday's opportunity of religious culture. There is nothing that I see which at all takes the place of joining in an act of common worship, and listening to words of religious counsel or instruction. Think how the voices of passion, and selfishness, and worldliness are clamoring round us from morning to night. Think how we are continually slipping on our upward way; how tired and discouraged and indifferent night finds us. Surely we are not wise in thinking to trust entirely to our private effort to recover ourselves. Let us go to the place that is consecrated to holy thoughts. Let us lift together the hymns of trust and praise. Let us hear over again, under newer light, the words that have in them perennial life; pray with the common supplication; listen to the reaffirmation of the true law of life, its worthiest aims, its divinest hopes. I believe that will do more to refresh, rest, reinvigorate us than anything else." —*Silas Farrington.*

NEWS NOTES

At Urbana, Ill., an interesting feature of the church work found expression in the summer services. The usual congregation was scattered, but owing to the presence of many students who were in the university for the summer lectures the congregations were large. Teachers and students from all parts of the state were present, and through them a large amount of Unitarian literature was read and distributed.

The General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches will meet at Buffalo, N. Y., October 6th to 9th. The meetings will be held in the First Unitarian Church and in the First Presby-

terian Church on the Circle. The opening service will be in the First Presbyterian Church, and the sermon will be preached by Rev. Samuel M. Crothers, D. D., of Cambridge, Mass. Full programs of the Conference can be secured by applying at 25 Beacon St., Boston.

Rev. Abbot Peterson of Lancaster has received and accepted a call to become associate minister of the First Parish of Brookline, where the Rev. William H. Lyon, D. D., has been a minister since 1896.

It was pleasant to greet at headquarters Rev. and Mrs. Arthur H. Sargent of Eureka, Cal. They made their appearance in the early part of August, visited friends and relatives, and after two months' vacation returned to their distant post. They report a strong and enthusiastic church on this frontier of our Unitarian Zion.

The Rev. George H. Cressey, D. D., who has served churches in England for several years, has returned to America, with the intention of resuming ministerial work in the near future.

Rev. Alfred C. Nickerson, whose impaired health necessitated his resignation at Plainfield, N. J., has returned from Europe, where he has spent the last year, and his friends will greatly rejoice at his improved condition and intention to take up the work of the ministry again.

People interested in the work at the Isles of Shoals will be glad to learn that after the Institute services were conducted in the little chapel through the month of August. Mr. Carl Wetherell, of the Young People's Religious Union, deserves great credit for the interest he has taken in making all necessary arrangements. Rev. John H. Wilson of Wilton, N. H., presided on the island, and conducted the services.

The attendance averaged about forty-five—a congregation which nearly filled the little church.

Rev. W. Copeland Bowie, Secretary of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, arrived in Boston the latter part of August, and preached at Fairhaven the 24th and 31st. After visiting friends and relatives in the vicinity of Boston, he departed for the Pacific coast by way of Toronto and the Great Lakes, to reach Vancouver September 14th. His itinerary includes all the large cities in the Northwestern provinces, returning by way of Boston, where he expects to arrive on November 11th. It is always a great pleasure to greet our colleague from across the water, whose enthusiasm and long devotion to our cause have won him the affectionate regard of his brethren in America. It is a matter of much regret that Mr. Bowie is unable to so arrange his dates as to be present at the General Conference in Buffalo.

Reports from those who have returned from the International Liberal Congress at Paris indicate that there was a good attendance and much interest shown in the addresses. After the Conference the Secretary, Dr. Wendte, took an extended trip through Spain, while many others scattered upon various tours in different parts of the continent.

The corner-stone of All Souls' Church, Winnipeg, was laid on July 19th. This event marks a new departure for our cause in the large metropolis of the Northwest. The church will be ready for occupancy before cold weather begins. At the service of dedication the ministers of the Icelandic Unitarian Church and of several other denominations took part.

The UNITARIAN CALENDAR is published monthly, except July and August, by the American Unitarian Association, at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Annual subscription, 25 cents.

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By THOMAS VAN NESS

These sermons have been selected by congregational vote, — one for every year during Mr. Van Ness's ministry, 1892-1912. The volume thus becomes an excellent memento of the church when on Copley Square, Boston. As a frontispiece is printed an excellent reproduction of its historic pulpit. The sermons themselves immediately impress the reader with their frequent evidences of the preacher's enthusiasm for humanity. The style is lucid and incisive, and the messages to which these sermons give voice are brave, vigorous and suggestive. They show a fine power of elaboration and construction. Covering, as they do, a period of twenty years, they reflect the religious thought which obtained during the closing years of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Being selected by congregational vote, the sermons reveal the especial interests of their time by showing not simply what subjects were uppermost in the preacher's mind, but what topics received the general approval of his hearers. They are valuable, therefore, in a historical sense, aside from the spiritual messages which they convey.

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